

## Valadao's vote may prove perilous

His support for GOP megabill comes with political risk. He says it's for district benefits.

BY SEEMA MEHTA

Already a ripe target for Democrats in the next election, Central Valley Rep. David Valadao put his political future in deeper peril this week by voting in favor of legislation that slashes the Medicaid coverage essential to roughly two-thirds of his constituents.

The Republican dairy farmer from Hanford said that despite his concerns about President Trump's megabill, he voted to support it because of concessions he helped negotiate that will help his district, such as an additional \$25 billion for rural hospitals, \$1 billion for Western water infrastructure, and agricultural investments.

More than half a million residents in Valadao's district are covered by the program known in California as Medi-Cal — the most of any state in the nation — according to the UC Berkeley Labor Center. While preserving tax breaks benefiting the wealthy, the bill passed by narrow Republican majorities in both the House and Senate will reduce federal Medicaid spending by \$104 trillion over 10 years, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office.

Valadao said his constituents will directly benefit from several provisions in the legislation, including the extension of the tax breaks, the elimination of taxes on tips and overtime, and the expansion of the child tax credit.

"These are real wins that will put more money back in the pockets of hardworking families throughout the Valley," he said. "No piece of legislation is perfect, but this bill ultimately reflects the priorities of [my district] — lower taxes, stronger farms, better infrastructure, and a commitment to protecting access to healthcare for Val-

[See Valadao, A11]



CARLIN STIEHL Los Angeles Times

THOUSANDS OF ANGELENOES staged a peaceful demonstration outside City Hall on the Fourth of July.

## July Fourth protest in L.A. fights ICE raids, budget bill

BY ALENE TCHEKMEDYIAN

Lawrence Herrera started carrying a folded-up copy of his birth certificate in his wallet last week. He also saved a picture of his passport on his phone's camera roll.

For the 67-year-old Atwater Village resident who was born and raised here,

the precaution felt silly. But he's not taking any chances.

"I started hearing, 'He's taking anyone and everyone,'" Herrera said, referring to President Trump's immigration crackdown. "I thought, 'You know what? That could be me.'"

Herrera was one of hundreds of protesters who spent Fourth of July in downtown Los Angeles to rally against the immigration

raids that have roiled the region and the surge in federal funding approved this week to keep them going. Many on the street said they were skipping the barbecues and fireworks this year. Instead, they showed up at City Hall, some in costumes or wrapped in flags. A 15-foot balloon of Trump in a Russian military uniform sat in Grand Park.

Erica Ortiz, 49, was

dressed as Lady Liberty in shackles. Herrera wore a Revolutionary War outfit covered in anti-Trump pins that he said was appropriate for the occasion.

"Guess what? We have no independence right now," he said. "That's why we're out here."

They marched through Olvera Street and outside the Federal Building, which

[See Protest, A7]

### ANALYSIS

## Israel and Iran are in a 'time-out'

Ceasefire has been holding, but an expert warns conflict is unresolved

BY NABIH BULOS

BEIRUT — After a hastily cobbled together ceasefire between Israel and Iran took hold June 24, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu jubilantly declared that the "existential threats" of Iran's nuclear

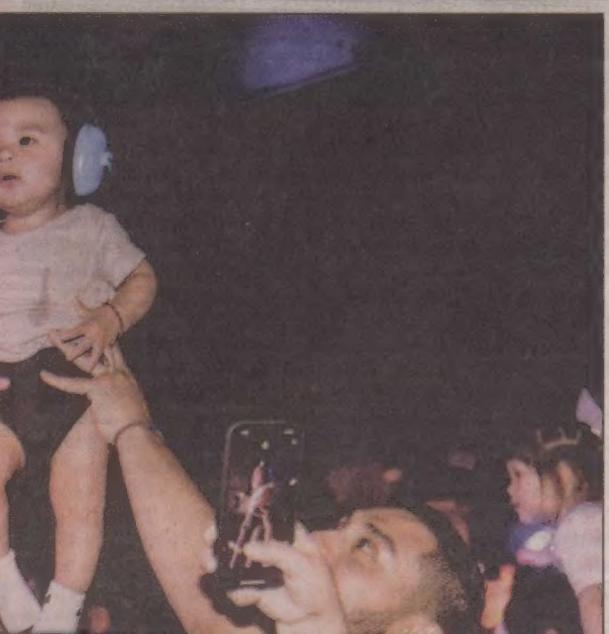
program and ballistic missile arsenal had been destroyed. The "historic victory," he said, would "abide for generations."

But nearly two weeks after President Trump deployed 30,000-pound bombs and Tomahawk missiles against Iran's nuclear facilities, questions linger over

how abiding that victory will prove to be. Even as U.S. and Israeli intelligence services continue assessing the strikes, and the White House insists Tehran may acquiesce to a grand bargain for peace in the region, analysts say the hostilities were less a finale than a prelude to the next act.

"There will be a sequel. The war remains an unfinished project, for both sides," said Bader Al-Saif, a professor of history at Kuwait University. Israel, he added, "wants to see the end of the Iranian regime or a more serious decapitation of its capabilities."

[See Analysis, A4]



## Baby's first rave? Inside a wild party

BY LYNDI LIN GRIGSBY

Natalie Z. Briones is a concert veteran. She's been to heavy metal shows and a punk music festival where she napped most of the time. On Sunday, she attended her first baby rave.

Natalie is a few months shy of 2. In the arms of her dad, Alvin Briones, 36, the pigtailed toddler squealed "Hi!" to anyone passing by the Roxy Theatre in West Hollywood, where the

mastermind behind Natalie's favorite song, "The Wheels on the Bus."

It's not the classic version most parents sing while slowly swaying and clapping — Pearce's rendition rages with enough bass to rattle rib cages. Natalie is here for it, and so is her mom, Alondra Briones, who plays the techno remix during her drives to work even without Natalie in the backseat.

"It's a pick-me-up," said Alondra, 28, from Compton, before filing into the theater

## Crews dump asbestos waste at landfills

Federal contractors improperly shipped wildfire debris, state and local records say.

BY TONY BRISCOE

Federal contractors tasked with clearing ash and debris from the Eaton and Palisades wildfires improperly sent truckloads of asbestos-tainted waste to non-hazardous landfills, including one where workers were not wearing respiratory protection, according to state and local records.

From Feb. 28 to March 24, federal cleanup crews gathered up wreckage from six burned-down homes as part of the wildfire recovery efforts led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its primary contractor Environmental Chemical Corp.

However, prior to reviewing mandated tests for asbestos, crews loaded the fire debris onto dump trucks bound for Simi Valley Landfill and Recycling Center, and possibly Calabasas Landfill in unincorporated Agoura and Sunshine Canyon Landfill in Los Angeles' Sylmar neighborhood, according to reports by the California Office of Emergency Services and Ventura County.

Later on, federal contractors learned those tests determined that the fire debris from these homes contained asbestos, a fire-resistant building material made up of durable threadlike fibers that can cause serious lung damage if inhaled.

The incident wasn't reported to landfill operators or environmental regulators until weeks later in mid-April.

Many Southern California residents and environmental groups had already objected to sending wildfire ash and debris to local landfills that were not designed to handle high levels of contaminants and potentially hazardous waste that are often commingled in wildfire debris. They feared toxic substances — including lead and asbestos — could pose a risk to municipal landfill workers and might even drift into nearby communities as airborne dust.

The botched asbestos disposal amplifies those concerns and illustrates that in some cases federal contractors are failing to adhere to hazardous waste protocols.

"You have to wonder if they caught it here, how many times didn't they catch it?" asked Jane Williams, executive director of the nonprofit California Communities Against Toxics. "It's the continued failure to effectively protect the public from the ash. This is further evidence of that failure. This is us deciding these

Sunday

# Los Angeles Times

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SUNDAY, JULY 6, 2025

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A GROUP totes a raft along Kern River for 16 miles to make a point that some stretches often are impassable.

## BOATERS WANT THEIR WHITEWATER BACK

A raft is portaged to protest water diverted for hydropower

By Ian James

KERNVILLE, Calif. — It started out like a typical whitewater rafting trip on the North Fork of the Kern River. Boaters paddled through churning rapids, gliding past boulders and crashing through breaking waves.

But after a few miles, as they approached a dam, the group drifted to the bank and lifted their blue raft out of the water to begin an eight-hour journey on land.

Their plan: to hold an unusual protest by carrying the raft on foot for 16 miles beside a stretch of river that is rendered impassable where the dam takes much of its water and reroutes it far downstream.

"That 16 miles of river is not runnable in a boat," said Jonathan Yates, an avid kayaker who organized the protest. "There's not enough water in the river."

As the six boaters set out on the road beside Fairview Dam in late June, about three-fourths of the river's flow was being diverted into a tunnel and coursing through pipelines that snake along the steep-sided canyon to Southern California Edison's Kern River No. 3 hydropower plant.

As the diverted water spins turbines to generate electricity, the section of river between the dam and the power plant is often reduced to a shallow stream among boulders.

Yates and other whitewater enthusiasts, including some who run rafting businesses, are demanding changes in the hydroelectric plant's operations to leave more water in the river. They are calling for measures to ensure flows for boating as Edison seeks to renew its license for the

[See Water, A8]

## Crackdown focuses on organized theft rings

L.A. County task force targets thieves as well as the 'fences' that sell stolen items.

By MATTHEW ORMSETH

They entered the stores with shopping bags already full and left empty-handed, sometimes counting cash.

Watching the transactions unfold in downtown Los Angeles were plainclothes detectives from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, who suspected the stores, Quickmart and Big Apple, were buying and reselling stolen

## L.A. Zoo's \$50-million breakup

By NOAH GOLDBERG

In 2022, Robert Ellis pledged \$200,000 to create a garden in the Los Angeles Zoo's bird theater.

By January, the city of Los Angeles had sued its nonprofit partner, the Greater Los Angeles Zoo Assn., amid long-standing tensions over spending and other issues.

Ellis, a GLAZA board member, redirected his donation to a fund for the nonprofit's legal fees.

At stake in the messy divorce between the city and the association is a nearly \$50-million endowment that

each side claims is theirs and that funds much of the zoo's special projects, capital improvements and exhibit construction.

The city's contract with GLAZA, which governs fundraising, special events and more, ends Tuesday, leaving the zoo in a precarious place, with no firm plan for how to proceed.

The zoo, which houses more than 1,600 animals, has become increasingly dilapidated. Exhibits including the lions, bears, sea lions and pelicans have closed because they need major renovations. The last two elephants, Billy and Tina, recently departed for the

Tulsa Zoo after decades of campaigning by animal rights advocates over living conditions and a history of deaths and health challenges.

The 59-year-old zoo, which occupies 133 acres in the northeast corner of Griffith Park, is struggling to maintain its national accreditation, with federal regulators finding peeling paint and rust in some exhibits.

U.S. Department of Agriculture inspectors and the Assn. of Zoos and Aquariums found a "critical lack of funding and staffing to address even the most basic re-

[See Zoo, A10]

## Paramount's Trump deal nearly fell apart

The \$16-million settlement came after months of high-stakes talks

By MEG JAMES

By early spring, Paramount Global was in crisis. President Trump wouldn't budge from his demand for an eye-popping sum of money and an apology from the company to settle his lawsuit over a CBS News "60 Minutes" interview with Kamala Harris. Journalists at the storied broadcaster were in revolt against the parent company.

Meanwhile, Paramount's board faced withering pressure, with a settlement widely seen as a prerequisite for getting government approval for the company's \$8-billion sale to David Ellison's Skydance Media, or the deal would collapse.

Then a new emergency erupted.

On May 4, CBS aired a hard-hitting "60 Minutes" segment that took aim at Trump's targeting of law firms. Correspondent Scott Pelley anchored the report, which relied heavily on an interview with a leading Trump irritant — former top Hillary Clinton advisor Marc Elias.

Trump was furious. He threatened Paramount with an additional lawsuit alleging defamation, according to people close to the situation who were not authorized to comment.

The behind-the-scenes drama eventually would culminate with Paramount agreeing to pay \$16 million to end the president's battle over edits to October's Harris interview, which Trump alleged was manipulated to [See Paramount, A12]

## AI's rise brings layoffs, job fears

By QUEENIE WONG

collar jobs in the next one to five years.

Ready or not, AI is reshaping, displacing and creating new roles as technology's impact on the job market ripples across multiple sectors. The AI frenzy has fueled anxiety from workers who fear their jobs could be automated. Roughly half of U.S. workers are worried about how AI may be used in the workplace in the future, and few think AI will lead to more job opportunities in the long run, according to a Pew Research Center report.

The heightened fear comes as major tech companies, such as Microsoft, Intel, Amazon and Meta cut workers, push for more efficiency and promote their AI tools. Tech companies have rolled out AI-powered features that can generate [See AI, A10]

### COLUMN ONE

## Hollywood, CIA have a mutually beneficial bond

Influence often works both ways between the United States' premier intelligence agency and its entertainment industry.

# CALIFORNIA

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GINA FERAZZI Los Angeles Times



ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times



JULIANA YAMADA Los Angeles Times

SURVIVORS of the Palisades and Eaton fires are seeking answers about their exposure to contaminants.

Voices NOAH HAGGERTY STAFF WRITER

## How covering the L.A. fires affected my blood

Like hundreds of Angelenos exposed to contaminants as disaster struck in January, this reporter decided to get tested for lead

I watched my blood snake through the tube stuck into my arm as I sat under a canopy erected by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health at an Altadena church.

Four months prior — almost to the hour — I stepped out of my car in Pacific Palisades to wailing sirens, raining ash and fleeing people.

Now, like hundreds of others, I desperately wanted to know: Had lead once locked away in the homes of the Palisades and Altadena seeped into my bloodstream? And, if so, how much now sat in the vial in the hands of Jessica Segura, a nurse with the Department of Public Health?

Tania Rysinski took my chair after me. She had evacuated from Pasadena and, after a trying remediation process, had moved back home with her husband and 3-year-old daughter. I asked what brought her to the Eaton fire resource fair.

"I also worry," she told me. "My daughter is the one that we worry about the most."

Despite hours of reading about and discussing remediation and health hazards with friends and family, Rysinski found little certainty that her family was safe. I shared her apprehension.

Alongside other health and environment reporters at The Times, I've

read thick scientific studies, reviewed reams of data and interviewed dozens of experts to understand what dangerous compounds, transported by wind and smoke, had laced our water systems, settled into homes and embedded themselves in the soil and our bodies.

Even so, our reporting left me feeling mostly frustrated with my brain. Several times, after I interviewed residents in the burn areas, they would say: You've covered this in detail. Would you feel comfortable moving back here with kids?

I didn't know.

A 20-foot-tall flame staring at you [See Blood, B7]

going independent investigation into what went wrong.

Despite continued community anger and frustration, no one has yet filed suit against the county for the lapse.

Almost a dozen residents told The Times that they were, at one point, considering a legal case against the county over its delayed evacuation alerts, but as the six-month deadline to file such a claim rapidly approached, more and more people abandoned the idea.

Several decided after talking to lawyers that they couldn't risk jeopardizing any settlement with Southern California Edison, which hundreds of residents already have sued, alleging the utility started the fire and should be held liable — potentially to the tune of \$24 billion to \$45 billion.

Others worried that legal hurdles could make a court battle unwinnable. Many, such as Heather Morrow, simply realized they didn't have the time or wherewithal to keep going, as much as they supported [See Altadena, B2]

## Altadena locals reluctant to sue county over fire

Lawsuits over delayed alerts fizzle as victims weigh risk, effort and slim odds of success.

By GRACE TOOHEY AND JENNY JARVIE

For many residents of west Altadena, it's hard to shake the feeling that they were victimized twice by the January firestorm that swept into their neighborhood.

Not only were massive swaths of the area destroyed in the blaze, but hundreds were forced to flee in dangerous conditions because evacuation alerts came hours after smoke and flames threatened their community. Many believe the delayed alerts in west Altadena were a key reason all but one of the Eaton fire's 18 deaths were there.

Revelations about the delay, made by The Times in January, sparked outrage toward Los Angeles County officials, who were tasked with issuing evacuation alerts, and prompted an on-

## Run Against ICE protests raids on L.A.'s immigrants

By TYRONE BEASON

DeMille Halliburton founded a running club 10 years ago to bring together residents of his South Los Angeles neighborhood.

On Saturday, he and several club members joined hundreds of other Angelenos for a different cause, the Run Against ICE, winding through the heart of the city to call for an end to raids by federal agents that have upended life for immigrants.

"We're always trying to find a way to share how upset we are about what's happening in the country right now, to be visible and outspoken," said Halliburton, 61. "Enough is enough."

Runners expressed a mix of outrage, heartache and defiance as they jogged in the hot sun for 15 miles through neighborhoods where raids have happened or that are important to immigrants, from streets lined

with sidewalk vendors in Koreatown and MacArthur Park to Dodger Stadium, Chinatown, the Fashion District and the city's historic core, a few blocks from the Metropolitan Detention Center, where immigration detainees are housed.

Halliburton's fellow running club member Gabriel Golden said he fears that L.A. and the nation have reached a boiling point because of the aggressive nature of the raids and what he sees as the racial profiling of Latinos like himself by federal agents identifying targets for detention and deportation.

"It's been terrifying, and unacceptable," said Golden, 42, a musician. "One of the first raids was by the Home Depot where I work near MacArthur Park."

Even though he hasn't personally been affected by the raids, Golden, a U.S. citizen who is half Guatemalan,

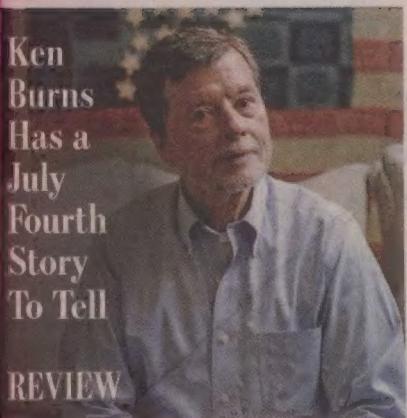
[See Run, B7]

## Clergy bear witness as migrants appear in immigration court

Faith leaders lend moral authority at hearings across the state. 'We're there trying to appeal to a higher authority than ICE,' one says

Voices STEVE LOPEZ COLUMNIST

A candid take on mortality and the



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# WSJ

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL WEEKEND

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## What's News

### Business & Finance

► President Trump said he was preparing to set unilateral tariff rates of up to 70% that would kick in Aug. 1, delaying the levies while putting pressure on global trade negotiations. A2

► U.S. job growth looked solid in June, but more than half of private industries cut jobs in the month. A1

► UPS is offering buyouts to delivery drivers for the first time in its 117-year history as it seeks cost savings because of stagnant parcel volumes, rising labor costs and a long slump in its stock price. B12

► India has barred Jane Street from the country's financial markets and said it would seize about \$570 million that the U.S. securities firm made from allegedly fraudulent trades. B13

► JPMorgan Chase is reorganizing its private bank to better serve the world's richest people, who want to safeguard their wealth by spreading it around the globe. B13

► Challenges are piling up for Tesla and the EV maker's CEO Musk, but the company's legion of individual investors are staying put. B13

► France fined fast-fashion retailer Shein more than \$40 million over allegedly misleading practices on prices and environmental claims. B12

### World-Wide

► Trump was set to sign his sprawling tax-and-spending bill into law, a major second-term victory that capped a furious push to lean on holdout lawmakers and meet his self-imposed Independence Day deadline. A1, A4-A6

► Hamas accepted the framework of a proposed new 60-day cease-fire and hostage-release deal in Gaza that, if concluded, would trigger U.S.-backed negotiations between the militants and Israel, Arab officials involved in the talks said. A1

► Torrential rain caused deadly flooding in parts of central Texas, knocking out power lines, damaging homes and setting off searches for missing people. A3

► A fast-moving wildfire exploded to become California's biggest of the year, forcing evacuations and the closure of a highway. A3

► As Trump is pulling back in Ukraine, Russian President Putin is ramping up its ground offensives and bombing campaigns against cities across Ukraine. A7

► Russia's sanctions-defying economy, propelled higher by the Ukraine war, is coming back down to earth. A7

► The U.N. atomic agency is pulling its inspectors out of Iran over safety concerns, severing the link between the agency and Tehran. A10

## Stars, Stripes and the Fourth of July



INDEPENDENCE-MINDED: A girl watches a July Fourth parade in Avondale Estates, Ga., as Americans celebrated the nation's 249th birthday Friday with cookouts, festivals and fireworks.

## Unpopular Bill Poses Big Challenge for GOP

Republicans had a hard time persuading some of their own lawmakers to support the party's big tax-cutting and do-

By Aaron Zitner,  
Lindsay Wise  
and Natalie Andrews

mestic-policy bill. They might have an even harder time selling it to the public.

Polls show that the bill is unpopular. Opposition outweighed support by more than

20 percentage points in recent Fox News and Quinnipiac University polls. Some Republican lawmakers facing tough races next year represent the most Medicaid-reliant districts. They will have to defend the big cuts in the bill to Medicaid, the health-insurance program for low-income and disabled people, as well as to rural hospitals and to nutrition assistance, once known as food stamps. Those cuts help

Please turn to page A4

## Wall Street Worries About Crisis-Level Budget Deficits

BY SAM GOLDFARB  
AND JUSTIN LAHART

U.S. budget deficits were already approaching \$2 trillion when Republican lawmakers set out to extend and expand tax cuts this year. Interest rates were high and the bond market was jumpy, producing worrying spikes in borrowing costs.

Republicans forged ahead anyway, defying warnings from Wall Street to Washington

that they were pushing the country further down a dangerous fiscal path.

The new legislation adds \$3.4 trillion to federal deficits through 2034 compared with a scenario in which Congress did nothing, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

Economists, investors and politicians have often warned that the U.S.'s growing debt burden would punish future generations. The market has

been willing to tolerate spikes in borrowing during crises such as a war or Covid, seeing it as a logical, and temporary, response to a sharp slowdown.

What stands out now to those sounding the alarm the loudest is that America is bingeing on debt when there's no such emergency requiring it. The deficit as a share of the economy is already around the levels reached in the era of

Please turn to page A6

## Hamas Accepts Plan To Get a Cease-Fire, Hoping to End War

BY SUMMER SAID  
AND ANAT PELED

Hamas accepted the framework of a proposed new 60-day cease-fire and hostage-release deal in Gaza that, if concluded, would immediately trigger U.S.-backed negotiations between the militants and Israel aimed at a permanent end to the war, said Arab officials involved in the talks.

The terms of the new proposal, put together by U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff along with mediators from Egypt and Qatar, also call for, among other things, the exchange of 10 living hostages for a larger number of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.

the officials said.

Hamas said late Friday it submitted its response to the mediators and is "fully ready and serious to immediately enter a round of negotiations on the mechanism for implementing this framework."

While the two sides need to work through details before any deal is signed, their agreement to the basic terms represents the best hope for pausing more than three months of heavy Israeli military action and a deep cutback of humanitarian supplies including food.

Negotiations between Israel and Hamas have been stuck for months because of

Please turn to page A10

## Putin Ignores Trump Plea, Escalates Attacks



DESTROYED: Burned-out cars lie amid the rubble near a Kyiv school Friday after Russia ramped up strikes despite a request from President Trump to Vladimir Putin for a truce. A7

The New Honeymoon:  
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## What's News

### Business & Finance

◆ **Tesla** is stuck in one of its worst sales streaks, with the company reporting that its global vehicle sales fell 13.5% in the second quarter and deliveries for the period were off by nearly the same degree. **A1**

◆ **Paramount Global** said it agreed in principle to pay \$16 million to settle a lawsuit with Trump over a "60 Minutes" interview with former Vice President Kamala Harris. **A1**

◆ **Gains in big tech stocks** lifted the S&P 500 and Nasdaq to records—up 0.5% and 0.9%, respectively—while the Dow industrials slipped less than 0.1%. **B1**

◆ **Investors sold British government bonds** and the pound fell sharply after the Labour government abandoned plans to cut ballooning welfare costs. **B1**

◆ **Microsoft** plans to cut another 9,000 workers in its latest round of layoffs, bringing its workforce reductions to 15,000 in the past two months. **B1**

◆ **Ripple applied for a national banking license**, joining the cryptocurrency companies seeking to cross into mainstream finance. **B1**

◆ **Activist investor Starboard** has built a stake of more than 9% in TripAdvisor after the online travel-review company eschewed takeover offers in the past year. **B3**

◆ **Alibaba said it would offer** the equivalent of about \$6.98 billion in coupons and vouchers to attract more customers in the Chinese market. **B2**

### World-Wide

◆ **House Republican leaders** worked to win over GOP critics of Trump's sprawling domestic-policy bill as lawmakers prepared to vote on the legislation. **A1**

◆ **Sean "Diddy" Combs** was found not guilty of racketeering and sex trafficking, but was convicted of less serious offenses in a case that alleged he ran a criminal enterprise for over two decades. **A1**

◆ **Iran suspended cooperation** with the U.N. atomic agency, denying inspectors the chance to assess the damage done by U.S. and Israeli airstrikes and setting up a new clash with the West. **A7**

◆ **Bryan Kohberger**, the man charged with killing four University of Idaho students, pleaded guilty as part of an agreement with prosecutors to avoid the death penalty. **A6**

◆ **The U.S. and Vietnam** struck a tariff deal that would permit American exports duty-free entry in return for a 20% U.S. tariff on Vietnamese goods, Trump said. **A2**

◆ **California developers** celebrated the rollback of a landmark environmental law, saying it would help clear the way for new housing in a state that badly needs it. **A3**

◆ **The EU proceeded** with an ambitious new target for reducing greenhouse-gas emissions, signaling a growing divide between the U.S. and the rest of the industrialized world. **A16**

## GOP Infighting Holds Up Bill

Trump, party leaders work to win over holdouts as measure reaches crucial votes

BY OLIVIA BEAVERS

WASHINGTON—House Republican leaders worked to win over GOP critics of President Trump's sprawling domestic-policy bill on Wednesday, a day after the Senate narrowly passed it.

Dozens of lawmakers had

raised complaints about the revised measure that passed the Senate on Tuesday, with fiscal hawks wanting deeper spending cuts and moderates worried about cuts to the social safety net.

"I feel very positive about the progress," said House Speaker Mike Johnson (R., La.), who had met with lawmakers all day. "I feel good about where we are and where we're headed."

The number of House Republicans who said they would oppose the Senate version of

the legislation had been seen as enough to block the bill's passage, though past standoffs have been resolved after pressure campaigns by the president and party leaders. Republicans have a thin 220-212 majority in the House.

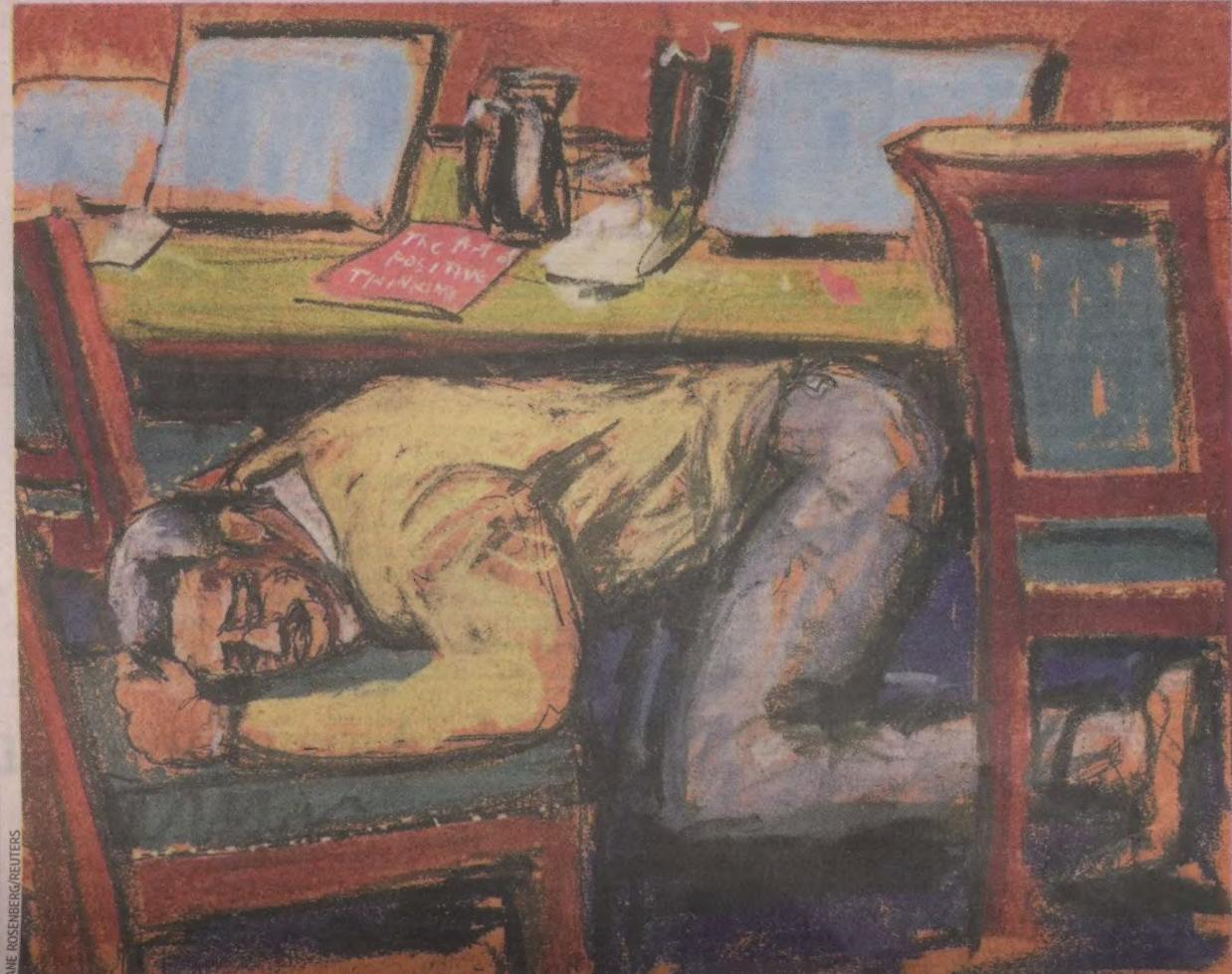
Party leaders were planning a crucial "rule" vote, with full passage possible as soon as later Wednesday or Thursday. Trump wants the bill on his desk this week to meet his July 4 deadline, though there are no practical consequences from waiting. Attendance is-

sues and continued talks appeared to stall action Wednesday afternoon.

Trump met separately Wednesday with members of the conservative House Freedom Caucus and moderate Republicans and urged both groups to get on board, according to White House officials. He emphasized the tax cuts in the

Please turn to page A4

- ◆ **Medicaid cuts affect more GOP voters.....** **A4**
- ◆ **State AI law ban divided the right.....** **A4**



A court sketch depicts Sean 'Diddy' Combs after the verdicts. 'Mr. Combs has been given his life by this jury,' his lawyer said.

## Combs Acquitted of Trafficking, Guilty on Prostitution Charges

By James Fanelli,  
Corinne Ramey  
and Katherine Sayre

Sean "Diddy" Combs was found not guilty of racketeering and sex trafficking offenses on Wednesday but convicted of less serious charges, a blow for prosecutors who had targeted the music mogul in a sprawling case that alleged he ran a criminal enterprise for over two decades.

While Combs, a 55-year-old

music mogul, was acquitted of the most serious charges against him, the jury convicted Combs on two counts of transportation to engage in prostitution. He had been accused by

federal prosecutors of committing a litany of offenses as part of the alleged enterprise: kidnapping, bribery, sex crimes and subsequent coverups.

Combs, who spent the past nine months in jail, held his lawyers' hands as the verdict was read. Afterward, he pumped his fists and made prayer hands toward the jury.

Later, he got down on his knees and prayed before his family, and supporters broke out in cheers in the courtroom.

During the trial, jurors grappled with thorny issues surrounding consent, power and love. They viewed images and video from the sex parties, which he called freak-offs, and

Please turn to page A6

## Paramount to Pay \$16 Million To Settle Lawsuit With President

BY JESSICA TOONKEK

Paramount Global said it has agreed in principle to pay \$16 million to settle a lawsuit with President Trump over a "60 Minutes" interview with former Vice President Kamala Harris, the company said.

The settlement, which doesn't include an apology,

comprises payments made to the president's future presidential library and legal fees. Paramount also agreed that "60 Minutes" will release transcripts of interviews with presidential candidates in the future after they have aired, according to the company.

The announcement caps a monthslong legal saga and ex-

tended negotiations between Paramount, which owns CBS News, and Trump's lawyers that included mediation. The company said the terms of the settlement were proposed by the mediator.

A spokesman for Trump's legal team said the settlement was "another win for the

Please turn to page A6

## Trump Puts MAGA Spin On 250th Bash

Allies take lead on July 4, 2026, events

BY MERIDITH McGRAW  
AND JESS BRAVIN

There wasn't much that President Trump's advisers could do to lift his dark mood in the winter of 2021, as he prepared to leave Washington after losing his re-election bid.

But years of dysfunction on the commission have provided the president and his advisers

with a chance to put a positive spin on the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

**The Movie Release of the Summer Is an \$80 Popcorn Bucket**

**INSIDE**

# Your favorite thriller may have come from CIA

[CIA, from A1] popular streaming TV series will be back at Langley to film this fall.

But their collaboration goes far deeper than that, officers said. Creative minds in Hollywood and the entertainment industry have long had a role at the Central Intelligence Agency, devising clever solutions to its most vexing problems, such as perfecting the art of disguise and harnessing a magician's ability to cast spell-binding illusions. Indeed, in the 1950s, a magician from New York named John Mulholland was secretly contracted by the agency to write a manual for Cold War spies on trickery and deception.

These days, the officers said, creative skills are more valuable than ever in such a technologically complex world.

"You're only limited by your own imagination — don't self-censor your ideas," said Janelle, a CIA public affairs officer, granted the ability to speak under her first name at the request of the agency. "We're always looking for partners."

David McCloskey, a former CIA analyst and author of "Damascus Station" and other spy thrillers, offered several theories on why the agency might be interested in fostering a robust relationship with Hollywood, calling it "a two-way street."

"There definitely have been operational applications for espionage," McCloskey said. "It's probably the exception to the rule, but when it happens, it's compelling."

It's easy to see why CIA leaders would be interested in Hollywood, he said, in part to shape impressions of the agency. "But their bread-and-butter business is receiving people to give secrets," he continued, "and part of that is getting close to people in power."

"The closer you are to Hollywood," McCloskey added, "that's a really interesting 'in' to having a lot of interesting conversations."

Some of the CIA's most iconic missions — at least the declassified ones — document the agency's rich history with Hollywood, including Canadian Caper, when CIA operatives disguised themselves as a film crew to rescue six American diplomats in Tehran during the Iran hostage crisis, an operation moviegoers will recog-



JIM COOKE Los Angeles Times

nize as the plot of "Argo."

"Argo" was almost too far-fetched to even believe," said Brent, an in-house historian at CIA headquarters. "It's almost more Hollywood than Hollywood."

Canadian Caper was both inspired by Hollywood and relied on Hollywood talent. Agent Tony Mendez had been a graphic artist before joining the agency and helping craft the mission.

Another key player was John Chambers, the makeup artist who gave the world Spock's ears on "Star Trek" and won an honorary Oscar for his trailblazing simian work on "Planet of the Apes." He was awarded the CIA's Intelligence Medal of Merit for his work on the covert rescue effort.

Just a few years before, Howard Hughes, then one of the world's richest men and a tycoon in media, film and aerospace, agreed to work with the CIA to provide cover for an effort by the agency to lift a sunken Soviet nuclear submarine off the floor of the Pacific Ocean.

Deploying Hughes' Glomar Explorer under the guise of mineral extraction, the CIA was able to salvage most of the sub before The Times broke a story blowing its cover — "the story that sunk our efforts," in CIA parlance.

And another mission was made possible thanks to a device invented by a professional photographer — a gadget that later became the inspiration of an over-the-top

scene in the blockbuster Batman film "The Dark Knight."

In Project Coldfeet, CIA agents gathered intelligence on a Soviet station erected on a precariously drifting sheet of ice in the Arctic needed a reliable extraction plan. But how does one pick up an agent without landing a plane on the ice?

The answer was the "skyhook": Balloons lifted a tether attached to a harness worn by an agent high into the sky. A CIA plane snagged the tether and carried the agent off to safety.

In "The Dark Knight," Batman makes a dramatic escape deploying the same kind of balloon-harness contraption.

CIA leadership often says that acceptance into the agency is harder than getting into Harvard and Yale combined. Yet the agency still has challenges recruiting the type of talent it is looking for — either in reaching those with unconventional skills, or in convincing them that they should leave secure, comparatively well-paid, comfortable jobs for a secretive life of public service.

It is no easy task managing work at the agency, especially with family, CIA officials acknowledged. Deciding if and when to share one's true identity with their children is a regular struggle. But

Janelle said the CIA tells potential recruits there is a middle ground that doesn't require them to entirely abandon their existing lives.

"People don't have to leave their companies to help their country and to work with CIA," Janelle said. "People come here because they love their country and know they can make a difference."

Janelle is part of a team that regularly engages with creatives who want to portray the agency or spies as accurately as possible.

"Some producers and directors reach out and they do care about accuracy," Janelle said, "but they ultimately pick and choose what's going to work for the film or show."

CIA analysts have also been known to leave the agency for opportunities in the entertainment industry, writing books and scripts drawing from their experiences — so long as they don't track too closely with those experiences.

Joe Weisberg, the writer and producer behind the television series "The Americans," and McCloskey, who is working on a fifth novel focused on U.S. and British intelligence, were both part of the agency before launching their writing careers. And as CIA alumni, they had to submit their works for review.

"There's a whole publication and classification-review process," Brent said.

That process can be a bit of a

slog, McCloskey said: "They quite literally redact in black ink."

But it is far more difficult for nonfiction writers than novelists.

"There could be bits of trade-craft, or alluding to assets, or people at the agency, which are clear no's," McCloskey said. "But with novels, it's not that hard to write them in a way to get them through the review board."

Try as they may, studios often repeat the same falsehoods about the CIA, no matter how often they are corrected. Officers and agents aren't the same thing, for one. And as disappointing as it may be for lovers of spy thrillers, the majority of officers are not licensed or trained to carry weapons.

"One thing Hollywood often gets wrong is the idea that it's one officer doing everything, when it's really a team sport here," Janelle said.

"Zero Dark Thirty," an Oscar-winning film released in 2012 about the hunt for Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, was widely acclaimed but criticized by some within the intelligence community over the credit it lends a single, fictional CIA analyst for tracking him down.

McCloskey sympathizes with the writer's dilemma.

"I can't have 35 people on a team. From a storytelling standpoint, it just doesn't work," he said, acknowledging that little in the field of espionage is accurately captured on screen, even though there are plenty of former spies available to work as consultants.

"There's no lack of sources to get it right," he said. "It's that the superhero spy — the Jack Ryans and Jason Bourne — are pretty much the Hollywood representation of espionage."

However inaccurately glorified and dramatized, the agency hopes that Hollywood's work can keep the revolving door moving, inspiring atypical talent to join its ranks.

"We have architects, carpenters, people who worked in logistics," Brent said. "People might not realize the range of skill sets here at CIA."

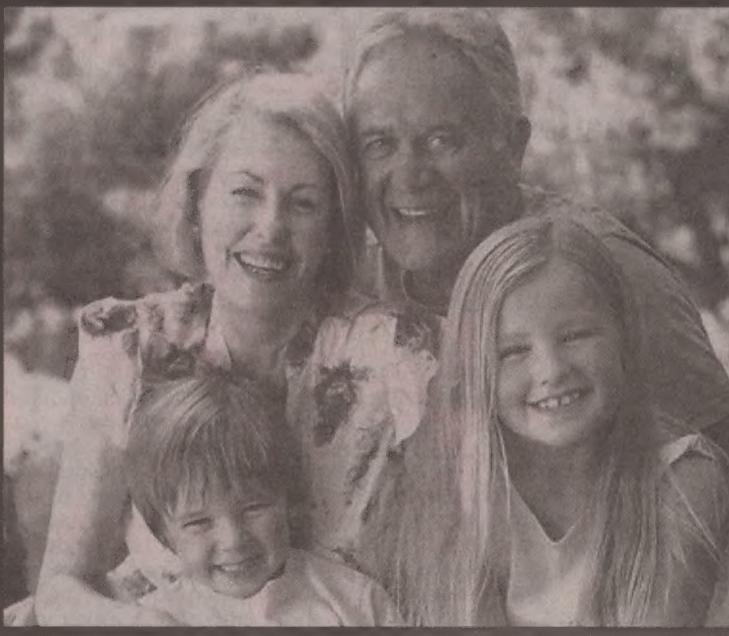
And as Canadian Caper showed, sometimes spycraft requires stagecraft. It's possible that what's needed most to complete the next mission won't be oceanography or data mining, but costume design. Or maybe another ballerina.

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CHATSWORTH

2:30pm

WEDNESDAY  
JULY 9<sup>TH</sup>

BURBANK

10:30am

California Pizza Kitchen  
601 N San Fernando Rd.

WOODLAND HILLS

2:30pm

THURSDAY  
JULY 10<sup>TH</sup>

SANTA CLARITA

10:30am

Denny's Restaurant  
16401 Delone St.

PALMDALE

2:30pm

## OPINION

# A Plague of Pests Is Coming for California

**Andrew Zaleski**

A journalist who covers science, technology and business.

**B**ACK in the late 1880s, California citrus farmers found themselves dealing with a crisis caused by a fat bug covered in a shieldlike, granular white wax. Known as the cottony cushion scale, this insect, which had hitchhiked aboard ships from Australia, usually spends its entire life with its mouth affixed to a single plant, greedily sucking out nutrients. Now the bugs were making meals of the state's citrus trees.

Some farmers resorted to erecting large canvas tents around their trees and fumigating the inside with hydrogen cyanide in attempts to murder the insect, which proved ineffective. That's when Charles Valentine Riley, who pioneered the field of entomology in the United States, was called in.

In his role as chief entomologist of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Mr. Riley sent an assistant to the land down under in 1888 to hunt for the bugs' natural predator. Within three months, a shipment of small branches arrived in California. The branches carried not only cottony cushion scale, but also another bug: the Vedalia beetle, a species of ladybug and a natural predator of the scale. As more shipments arrived, entomologists in California bred the beetles and eventually released them, marveling as the ladybugs dined ravenously. By the end of 1889, the fat cottony cushion scale was no longer a grave threat to citrus growers.

"It's hard to imagine what California's economy would have been like if citrus had collapsed and never taken off," said Mark S. Hoddle, an entomologist at the University of California, Riverside.

The sharp reduction of cottony cushion scale was one of the United States' first large-scale programs in biological control, the broad term for using one organism — an animal, a fish, an insect or even a bacterium — to suppress another organism. These efforts won't fully eliminate a targeted pest. But if done right, they can drive down a pest population to levels where future damage is minimal.

Debates over biological control are resurfacing as U.S. entomologists seek to do something about another pest in their cross hairs: the spotted lanternfly, a winged insect that feasts on vineyard vines, fruit and forest trees. Baby lanternflies start to hatch in May and begin to grow into adults over the summer. This month, millions of people on the East Coast, from New York to Virginia, will start to see lanternflies overhead and on the ground. Some models predict the bugs could be in California in less than 10 years, ready to pounce on the vines vital to the state's \$88 billion wine industry.

American scientists, Dr. Hoddle included, are actively studying a nonnative biocontrol agent right out of bug's worst nightmare: parasitic wasps. Praise God they're not harmful to people or pets, because these wasps reproduce by laying eggs in or on the bodies of other host species. Researchers are investigating their potential to curb the lanternfly population, which has reached frightening proportions since the bug made

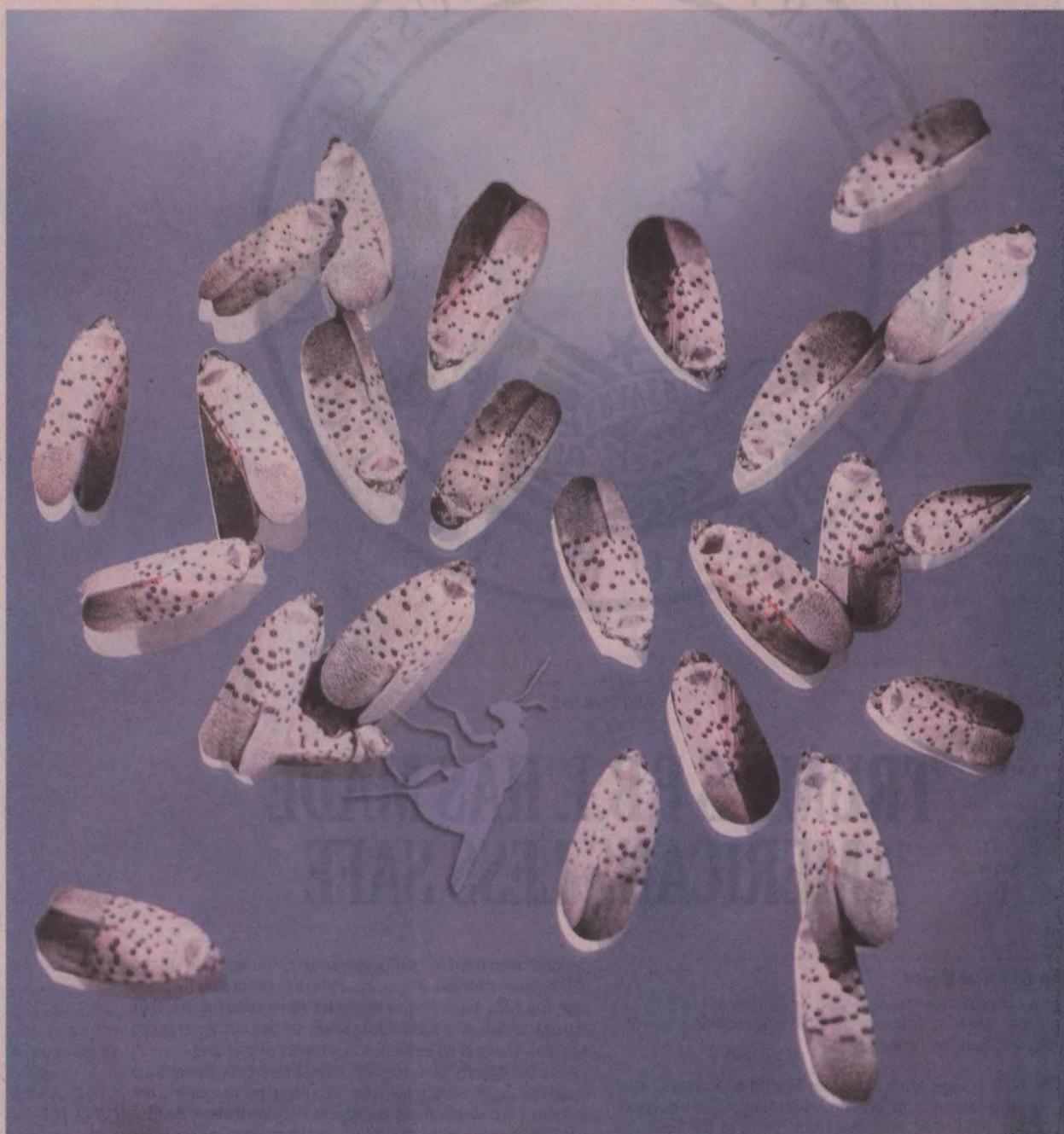


PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY DANIELLE EZZO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; SOURCE IMAGES BY ERIC DALE CREATIVE, DANUT VIERU, ALEKSS, VIA ADOBE STOCK; BILL BOCH, MOPPET, VIA GETTY IMAGES; AND DONALD HOBERN

are executed clumsily or incompetently. History is full of bungled attempts. Two decades before the ladybugs' success in California, another tree-killing outbreak occurred on the opposite side of the country. In the 1860s, a man in Medford, Mass., keen on finding a moth more favorable for silk production, imported a colony of European gypsy moths, which promptly escaped from his home and established themselves in neighborhood trees. Over the next decades, they dispersed all over the Northeast, defoliating acres of forest along the way. Once again the U.S.D.A. got involved (although not under the seasoned hand of Mr. Riley, who died in 1895). Officials turned to Europe, where they found a parasitic fly that injects larvae into gypsy moth caterpillars' bodies. The larvae eat the caterpillars from the inside, killing them.

What made this wasp so good at homing in on ash white flies was an element that remains central to biocontrol regulation today: host range, the number of species an antagonist organism is able to attack. The parasitic wasps that went after ash flies had a narrow range, only targeting a few species. Now compare that wasp to a cane toad, which will pretty much eat anything it can fit into its mouth.

## We killed gypsy moths and gray beetles. We can do it again with lanternflies.

mold that impedes photosynthesis. Researchers found a parasitic wasp native to the Mediterranean that attacked ash white flies and released the wasps in California, and soon the ash-tree eaters ceased to be a plague.

According to a review done in 2020, every dollar spent on weed biocontrol leads to at least an \$8 dollar return on investment, thanks to reduced weed impacts.

The real problem, quite simply, is human nature. "People go on vacation, they see a pretty plant, they're like, 'I'll take these seeds, grow them in my garden,'" Ms. Andreas said. "Sometimes we don't know things would be a problem until it's too late."

So where does that leave us with a pest like the invasive spotted lanternfly? I'd say stomp the suckers whenever you see them this summer and bring on the wasps. Saving the country's vineyards and forests is paramount, but we'd do well to consider the larger stakes of allowing these insects to spread more aggressively across America. We should try to find a means of biological control for lanternflies and be careful as we do it — positions that aren't mutually exclusive.

It's a tricky calculus. One parasitic wasp sourced from lanternflies in China has already been excluded from further research. It attacked the eggs of the spotted lanternfly, but it also parasitized the eggs of native American stink bugs and moths.

"It's not like we go to China and get some parasites, bring them back to California, and just start throwing them out of the window of the car as we drive up and down grape fields," Dr. Hoddle said. "I don't want to be responsible for releasing something and they call it the 'Hoddle Plague' that destroyed California."

Who would? There are rights and wrongs to human interference, no doubt. In this janitorial role that biocontrol often inhabits, we're often cleaning up messes of our own making. And while there's no turning back the clock on globalization, it has also made it possible to address some of these problems.

Dr. Hoddle knows this all too well. More than 100 years after cottony cushion scale was inadvertently transported to California, the bug arrived on the Galápagos Islands, in the 1980s. The scale threatened endemic island plant species. The challenge of the outbreak of cottony cushion scale was one that researchers had met. Ladybugs were released on the Galápagos — a project Dr. Hoddle participated in — and again waged war. That biocontrol program continues to be a success. It's also a reminder that doing nothing



its way into the United States from China, its native land, to Pennsylvania in 2014. Many believe it arrived via a shipment of landscaping stone. Therein lies the rub. The increasing scale of trade and globalization makes biocontrol a rather anthropocentric exercise. The species humans deem as pests, be they bugs or vegetation, often make their way into unwanted geographies on the backs of human activity. We play a central part in upending ecosystems — and then we come along again to forcibly restore balance.

Over the past 150 years, more than 2,000 species have been released worldwide to sub-

The parasitic fly was released into the United States, where it killed gypsy moths. But it also attacked more than 180 other species of native insects, including cecropia moths, the largest moths in North America. To this day, populations of cecropia moths have plummeted wherever great numbers of this European parasitic fly thrived. Such is the nature of biocontrol: When it fails, it fails big.

In 1930s Australia, gray beetles were running wild over the continent's sugar cane fields. Cane toads were imported to solve the problem and now overwhelm neighborhoods,

# Galaxy's silence on ICE raids angers fans

The team's supporter groups are expressing their frustration at actions targeting region's Latino community

BY EDUARD CAUCH

Gloria Jiménez and Bruce Martin, leaders of a Galaxy supporter group called the Angel City Brigade, are certain this is no time to be quiet.

Since its founding in 2007, Angel City Brigade, one of the Galaxy's largest fan groups, has made its voice heard in Sections 121 and 122 of Dignity Health Sports Park in Carson.

On Friday, during the typically festive Fourth of July fireworks game, Galaxy supporter groups expressed their frustration and anger over seeing Southern California's Latino community targeted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids in recent weeks.

The fans say they are upset by the Galaxy management's silence amid ICE's presence in the Latino community. The majority of Galaxy fans are Latino, but the team has not issued any statements in support of fans, remaining as quiet as the Dodgers until the MLB team felt pressure and made a \$1-million donation to benefit families affected by the raids.

The Galaxy and representatives of the teams' supporter groups have held closed-door talks, but it didn't lead to a public statement by the club. Outside the stadium before the match against the Whitecaps on Thursday, Angel City Brigade displayed signs that read "Stop the Raids," "Free Soil" and "No One is Illegal."

At the end of the national anthem, "Victoria Block," the section where most of the Galaxy's fan groups stand, unfurled a flag with three images: a farmworker; Roy Benavidez, a U.S. Army Medal of Honor recipient; and Elena Rios, president of the National Hispanic Health Foundation. At the bottom, the banner read: "Fight Ignorance, Not Immigrants."

During the 12th minute of the match, Angel City Brigade left the stands in protest. Supporter groups the Galaxians and Galaxy Outlawz protested silently, carrying no drums or trumpets. They also did not sing or chant during the game.

"What's going on in Los Angeles has nothing to do with the players. They know that. What's going on in Los Angeles we don't like," Manuel Martínez, leader of the Galaxy Outlawz, said before the match. "I belong to a family of immigrants who became citizens. So we know the struggle that people go through. We know that there are hard-working, innocent workers out there."

The Riot Squad, on the other side of the stadium, also remained silent and displayed a message that read: "We like our Whiskey Neat, and our Land and People Free."

This is not the first time Galaxy fan groups have taken action when they were unhappy with team management.

Angel City Brigade, along



JILL CONNELLY Los Angeles Times

A BANNER reading "Fight Ignorance, Not Immigrants" is displayed at Dignity Health Sports Park before the Galaxy's match on Friday.



WILLIAM LIANG Associated Press

GALAXY forward Joseph Paintsil, left, and Vancouver forward Jayden Nelson vie for the ball.

## Paintsil scores twice in Galaxy's victory

Joseph Paintsil had two goals, Matheus Nascimento also scored a goal and the Galaxy beat the Vancouver Whitecaps 3-0 on Friday night to end a three-game winless streak.

The Galaxy (2-13-6), the defending MLS Cup champion, won for the first time since it beat Real Salt Lake 2-0 on May 31 to snap a 16-game winless streak to open the season. The Galaxy went into the game with 13 points, fewest in all of MLS.

The Whitecaps (11-4-5) have lost three of their last four. Vancouver is second in the Western Conference with 38 points, behind San Diego (39).

Edwin Cerrillo flicked a shot from 30 yards out that was deflected by goalkeeper Yohei Takaoka and Nascimento put away the rebound with a first-touch finish to open the scoring in the second minute.

Paintsil made it 2-0 in the 60th. Gabriel Pec played an long arcing ball to the top of the penalty box, where Marco Reus tapped a first-touch pass to a wide-open Paintsil, who calmly flicked a shot inside the back post from the left side of the area.

Paintsil converted from the penalty spot in the 77th minute for his first career multi-goal game. The 27-year-old forward has three goals and one assist this season after he finished with 10 goals and 10 assists last season, his first in MLS.

Novak Micovic had a save for L.A. The Galaxy had 55% possession and outshot Vancouver 12-6.

— ASSOCIATED PRESS

with other groups such as LA Riot Squad, Galaxy Outlawz and the Galaxians, led boycotts while demanding the removal of then-team president Chris Klein after mismanagement and decisions they felt didn't make the team competitive enough to win. Their effort paid off: Klein stepped down and new management eventually led the club to its sixth MLS championship at the end of last season.

On Friday, in addition to issuing a statement reaffirming their "non-discriminatory principles, which oppose exclusion and prejudice based on race, origin, gender identity, sexuality or gender expression," the fans decided to organize a fundraiser to support pro-immigrant organizations affected by the Trump administration's budget cuts: Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA), Border Kindness and Immigrant Defenders Law Center.

To raise funds, they sold T-shirts with an image of a protester in Chinatown confronting an ICE agent.

"This is our way of showing that we want to help, and to fight what's going on," said Martin, an L.A. native.

The T-shirt sales raised \$4,000 for the three organizations.

Previously, Angel City Brigade, like other Galaxy supporter groups, decided not to travel to the June 28 road match against the Earthquakes in San José as a precaution against the raids. About 600 Galaxy fans typically attend the road match.

"We have members who have not been able to work. We have members who have

not been able to go out to games or attend events. San José would have been one of them," Jiménez said. "We decided that as a group, we couldn't travel without leaving our brothers and sisters here. So in solidarity with the people who can't attend because of fear of what's going on, we decided to cancel the event."

While the other two professional soccer teams in Los Angeles — LAFC and Angel City FC — have issued public statements in support of the Latino immigrant community, the Galaxy's ownership has not addressed the issue. Angel City took its support further, wearing "Immigrant City Football Club" warm-up shirts, giving away some shirts to fans and selling more on its website as a fundraiser to support an organization that provides legal support for immigrants.

So far, the only member of the Galaxy who has addressed the issue publicly is head coach Greg Vanney.

"I think we all know someone who is probably affected by what's going on, so it's hard from a human standpoint not to have compassion for the families and those who are affected by what's going on," Vanney said before a game against St. Louis City SC in June.

"We have to really help each other, versus expecting others to do it," Jiménez said. "That the support didn't come from our team, as we expected, broke our hearts into a thousand pieces."

In the past, the Galaxy and supporter groups have collaborated while celebrating Latin American countries, incorporating their cultural symbols into team

merchandise. But amid the Galaxy's silence, fans are starting to doubt the sincerity of the cultural celebrations.

"It's sad and disappointing to me. This team that has been in Los Angeles since the mid-1990s, and they've leveraged the culture for publicity. When they signed [Mexican soccer star] Chicharito for example, they were strong on Mexican culture and things like that. So when this all started, you would think that they would be for their culture, that they would be there for the fans," Jiménez said. "And by not saying anything, it doesn't say that they really care about it. Families are being torn apart and they just stay silent."

Jiménez said there isn't a day that goes by that she doesn't cry or feel anger about the ICE raids.

"We already know what we are to them, we are not friends or family," she said of the Galaxy. "We are fans and franchise."

Martin said he has received messages on social media, including from Galaxy fans and supporters of other teams, criticizing his stance. However, Angel City Brigade said its members made a unanimous decision to protest.

"We have always had moments where we have a very clear vision about how we feel," Jiménez said. "And I think this is one of the times when everyone has made the same decision."

Galaxy fans plan to stage more protests during the team's next home match.

This article first appeared in Spanish via L.A. Times en Español.

### SOCcer ROUNDUP

## PSG closer to another trophy in Club World Cup

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Désiré Doué scored in the 78th minute, and Paris Saint-Germain moved a

Hakimi said. "We are really happy. We know Bayern is one of the teams that plays similarly to us. They are a strong team. It was a really good effort today, a really



Real Madrid beats Borussia Dortmund

Kylian Mbappé's spectacular bicycle kick was among three goals in sec-

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- ④ Alge/compiling collection
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- ⑥ MARS GLOBAL SURVEYOR (ATLAS)
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